

December 31, 1977

THE SHAH. Mr. President, Mrs. Carter, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

It gives the Shabanou and myself great pleasure to welcome you to our country. This reception is particularly auspicious since it takes place on the eve of 1978, and your presence here represents a New Year's gift for your Iranian friends.

In our country, according to ancient tradition, the visit of the first guest in the new year is an omen for that year. And although the annual new year is celebrated with the advent of spring, nevertheless, since the distinguished guest tonight is such a person of good will and achievement, naturally we consider it as a most excellent omen.

Mr. President, you now have come to a country which has always had unshakable links with your country and your great nation. We are united together by a special relationship made all the closer by a wide community of mutual interests, which we share in our firm determination to contribute to the maintenance of world peace and security in assuring human progress and betterment.

History has been witness to the growth and development of an outstanding relationship Between two nations motivated by common trust, good will, and respect which has repeatedly withstood the test of time.

Humanitarianism, liberty, good will, constructiveness, and creativeness, which are the distinctive qualities of the great American nation, have always been highly regarded by us. Fortunately, our American friends have also perceived this friendship and regard of our people from the very beginning.

The Reverend Mr. Smith, the first American that set foot on the land of Iran in the year 1832, wrote in his assignment report that living among good people like Iranians and serving them was more' pleasant for him than anything else, and that he considered the best days of his life those spent in this country.

It gives me pleasure to state that the fruitful cooperation, the social and cultural fields between our two nations have commenced even prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The first modern school was established in Iran in the year 1836 by American missionaries. The American College in Tehran, which was established 100 years ago, was an outstanding center for the education and training of Iranian youth during the whole course of its activities. Our people carry such good memories of its beloved principal, Dr. Samuel Jordan, that one of the highways of Tehran has been named after him.

Now that we are reminiscing on our meritorious American friends, it is perhaps suitable to cherish the memory of Howard Baskerville, a young American who, upon completion of his studies at Princeton, was assigned as a teacher in the Memorial School at Tabriz and, during the constitutional revolution of Iran, heroically and bravely lost his life in the fight for freedom.

This feeling towards Iran has always been evidenced in the literary works of your nation. For instance, the poetry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, in glorifying Iran, is .one of the most beautiful examples of its kind in the world of literature. The basic and comprehensive work of Arthur Upham

Pope regarding the art of Iran is the best research work that has ever been prepared in this field. Likewise, the extensive studies of William Jackson regarding the culture and civilization of Iran are among the most valuable researches in the history of Iranology.

Numerous universities in the United States have expanded activities in the fields of Iranian studies and its language. Also valuable treasures of the culture and art of Iran are preserved in various libraries and museums of your country. Moreover, American archeologists have played an eminent role in archeological discoveries in Iran.

In the political field, our nation carries unforgettable memories of the role of America in our crisis and times of stress, from the beginning of the present century. For instance, we will never forget that in the great political and economic adversity of our country, in the second decade of this century, William Morgan Shuster, upon the invitation of the government of Iran, sincerely endeavored to bring order into the finances of Iran. Moreover, when, following the 1919 agreement, Iran was in danger of losing its independence, America raised its voice to the world in support of the sovereignty of Iran, as also in the years after the Second World War, America provided us with vital economic and political assistance.

During World War II, I personally had the pleasure of meeting President Franklin Roosevelt in our capital city. Since then I had the opportunity of welcoming in Iran several Presidents of the United States. And I personally have also traveled repeatedly to your great country. I am glad to state that all these visits have been accompanied with the spirit of friendship and cooperation, which is the distinct quality of our relationship.

An example of this cooperation is the long-term economic exchange agreement between Iran and the United States, which was recently signed and, in its scope, is the largest agreement ever signed between us and any other country.

Almost 100 years ago the first American Ambassador, Samuel G. W. Benjamin, who had been assigned by President Chester Alan Arthur, came to Iran. In his book, "Persia and the Persians," he wrote, "Iran today is a weak and unknown country, but certainly this country will step into the path of progress and in the not too distant future will again play an important role in the world."

Now with this prediction coming true, our country has started its role within its potentialities and possibilities. Perhaps it need not be mentioned, but this is a positive and constructive role and in conformity with the principles that your great country has always supported independent and of which you, Mr. President, are the most notable advocate.

From the early days of your election campaign you indicated how much you will attach to high ideals of right and justice, moral beliefs in human values. These are all qualities that have elevated the American society in such a short period of time to its present high prestige in the world, and a nation like ours with its ancient culture can very well feel to what extent such concepts in moral principles are vital, especially in the world of today, which is suffering from some sort of a civilization crisis.

I entertain excellent memories of the fruitful discussions which I had with you in Washington a few weeks ago. The cordial hospitality extended by Mrs. Carter and yourself and the warmth of your attitude and the understanding which you showed in our discussions have deeply touched me. I am glad that our discussions were so meaningful, particularly in the case of energy, which is one of the most important and vital problems of our era.

We, who are among the greatest producers, share the same view that the present unrestricted use of oil--which is an expendable and finite resource--is not logical and that this valuable commodity, instead of the present, normal daily use, should be utilized mainly in the petrochemical industry. In the meantime, efforts should be exerted to find a substitute in new resources of energy.

Fortunately, we enjoy close cooperation with your country in the field of energy, which will no doubt be consolidated in the future. We also share the same opinions regarding the establishment of an honorable and durable peace, and we sincerely hope that 1978, which begins tomorrow, will be a year of such a peace of which you are the harbinger.

I wish every success to you, Mr. President, and Mrs. Carter, who has proved to be such a successful ambassador of good will, motivated, as she is, by high humanitarian ideals in your present tour, and hope that this will prove to be fruitful trips in the interest of the whole world and that of peace, security, and welfare for human society.

With this hope I propose a toast, Mr. President, for your and Mrs. Carter's health and happiness, for the further progress and prosperity of the great and noble American people, for the ever increasing friendship and cooperation between our two countries, and for international peace and understanding.

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